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NAZARBAYEV UNIVERSITY
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EXPLAINING GAPS IN RUSSIA'S MIGRATION POLICY: THE CASE OF
COMPATRIOTS RESETTLEMENT PROGRAM.

РЕСЕЙ МИГРАЦИЯ САЯСАТЫНДА ҚАРАМА-ҚАЙШЫЛЫҚТАРДЫ АНЫҚТАУ:
ОТАНДАСТАРДЫҢ РЕСЕЙГЕ ҚАЙТА ОРАЛУ БАҒДАРЛАМАСЫНЫҢ ЖАЙЫН
ТАЛҚЫЛАУ.

ОБЪЯСНЕНИЕ НЕСОСТЫКОВОК В МИГРАЦИОННОЙ ПОЛИТИКЕ РОССИИ НА
ПРИМЕРЕ ПРОГРАММЫ ПЕРЕСЕЛЕНИЯ СООТЕЧЕСТВЕННИКОВ.

by
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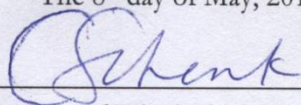
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Abstract

The increasing flow of immigrants all over the world in the past several decades has shifted the migration policies of countries to the top of their political agendas. Alongside the potential benefits of immigration, like increases in human capital, flows of people across borders can also have a destabilizing effect on the country. Therefore, countries tend to seek migration policies that can bring a balance between the economic, international and cultural demands of the state.

Despite the best of intentions of states to balance between various types of demands, there is almost always a gap between policy and its practical implementation. Based on the example of the Russian Federation and its Compatriots Resettlement Program this project shows how the Russian government tries to balance between public demands based on the exclusivist national identity and economic need of the state to attract migrants, especially in underdeveloped regions.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | |
|---|------|
| List of Tables..... | vi |
| List of Figures..... | vii |
| Acknowledgments..... | viii |
| | |
| Chapter 1 Designing Migration Policy. International Experience..... | 1 |
| Chapter 2 The Implementation Gap in Russian Migration Policy..... | 11 |
| Chapter 3 The Evolution of the Migration and Citizenship Legislation in Russia..... | 27 |
| Chapter 4 The Practical Implementation of the Citizenship Policy in Russia..... | 40 |
| Chapter 5 Conclusion and the Prospects for the Future Research..... | 55 |
| | |
| References..... | 59 |

List of Tables

| | |
|--|----|
| Table 1. The Regional Requirements for the Application to Compatriots Resettlement Program..... | 23 |
| Table 2. The Number of Naturalized Citizens in the Russian Federation from 2007 to 2017 (National Statistics Committee)..... | 29 |

List of Figures

| | |
|---|----|
| Figure 1. The Map of Russian Regions that Participate in the Compatriots Resettlement Program..... | 31 |
| Figure 2. The Standard Procedure of Naturalization in Russian Federation..... | 33 |
| Figure 3. The Process of Naturalization in the Russian Federation through the Simplifications in the Standard Procedure | 34 |
| Figure 4. The Process of Naturalization in the Russian Federation through the Compatriots Resettlement Program..... | 36 |

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Chapter 1. Designing Migration Policy. International Experience.

The increasing flow of immigrants all over the world in the past several decades has shifted the migration policies of countries to the top of their political agendas. Alongside the potential benefits of immigration, like increases in human capital, flows of people across borders can also have a destabilizing effect on the country (Duvell 2005). Therefore, countries tend to seek migration policies that can bring a balance between the economic, international and cultural demands of the state (Rosenblum and Cornelius 2012). It is a rare case that the state follows a “zero migration policy”. Rather most states pursue policies that differentiate between wanted and unwanted categories (Duvell 2005). Some countries like the United States and Canada have maneuvered between current demands of the state by creating the migration policies that attract immigrants in accordance with the long-term interests of the state (Cornelius 2005, Reitz 2014). However, not all countries share the national identity of a state based on immigration. Thus, in countries where the migration was not at the core of ideology, government needs to take into consideration the national ideas that prevail while designing the migration policy in order to sustain the stability (Hollifield et al. 2014). For example, in Germany they attract migrants based on the specific economic demands, yet provide limited prospects for future naturalization (Martin 2014).

Despite the best of intentions of states to balance between various types of demands, there is almost always a gap between policy and its practical implementation (Czaika and de Haas 2013). Under these conditions migration policies play a sort of symbolic role (Hollifield et al. 2014), where policies are not realized and yet the state uses rhetoric and policies to balance between public opinion, economic demand, and other considerations. The literature defines several types of gaps in the effectiveness of migration policies: between the official discourse of the government and the content of the policies, the gap between the policies and their practical implementation, and the difference between the implementation and outcomes

(Czaika and de Haas 2013). In this research I will focus particularly on two types of gaps: the difference between the official discourse and the content of the migration policy of the state; and the perceived discrepancy between the policy and its implementation. The efficacy gap will stay beyond the scope of this project, because the information that could be helpful to assess it did not appear from my data. I will use the example of the Russian Federation and its Compatriots Resettlement Program in order to show that how Russian government tries to balance between public demands based on the exclusivist national identity and economic need of the state to attract migrants, especially in underdeveloped regions.

The Difference between the Discourse and the Content of Migration Policy in Russia.

The first gap, that between the ways that the government talks about migration and the policies they adopt, is a result of pressures coming from portions of the population that adhere to an ethnic national identity. Russia is one of the largest immigrant receiving countries in the world (Schenk 2018a). The increasing role of nationalism in Russia had influenced the way the government was designing the migration policy of the state. This trend was present in the policymaking of Russia since the country got its independence. When Yeltsin came to power his civic view on the national idea of the country created resulted in the creation of very liberal migration policy that was open for all of the citizens of the former Soviet Union (Kolstoe 1995, Shevel 2011). However, the societal pressure that demanded the shift of the policy in more ethnic frames resulted in the adoption of the Law on Compatriots, which was granting special status for the people who are inherently bound to Russia (Shevel 2011). After Putin came to power the civic view on the national idea remained at the initial stages, and the changes that were made in the migration policy of the country were mainly pragmatic and primarily targeting the citizenship within Russian territory, providing less support to the resettlement of the people from other states (Shevel 2011).

However, the growing pressure from the society and rising anti-migrant sentiments shifted the nationalism in more ethnic way (Ponarin and Komin 2018), which resulted in subsequent changes in the migration policy of the state. The creation of the Compatriots Resettlement Program in 2007 and declaring it a permanent program in 2012, and using it to integrate Ukrainian citizens in 2014 all demonstrate how emphasizing the priority of return migrants can compliment an ethnic view of nationalism. When the category of compatriots were made the main target group in the New Concept of Migration Policy of the Russian Federation (2018), ignoring the comparatively larger potential of labor migrants from Central Asian countries to contribute to demographic goals, the state seemed to acknowledge the central role of ethnically Slavic migrants as priority categories. Thus, by creating a special track for the naturalization of compatriots and by emphasizing the migration of compatriots in the official discourse, the state created the desired category that it wants to attract.

In this thesis I will show that despite the development of the official discourse on migration policy, specifically the way it emphasizes cultural category of Compatriots, in fact the policy is designed in a pragmatic manner and it targets immigrants in accordance to the economic demands of the regions. Based on the data collected from my interviews with experts on Russian nationalism and migration and the analysis of criteria that regions of Russia use while selecting the participants in the Compatriots Resettlement Program, I argue that the federal nature Russia and the vague legal definition of a compatriot allows local administrations to maneuver the policy the way that will attract people who are suitable for the current economic demands. Cultural variables rarely if ever have an influence while selecting immigrants for the resettlement.

The Difference between the Policy and its Implementation. The Case of the Compatriots Resettlement Program.

A gap that is widely articulated in the literature (Mukomel 2008, Vorobyeva et al. 2016, Myhre 2018) is between the policy and implementation of the Compatriots Resettlement Program. I argue to the contrary that the gap between policy and implementation is not that drastic. Rather the gap that Russian scholars often identify is that between the goals of the policy and the outcomes, or numbers of migrants who have participated in the program. The many criticism of the program based on the gap between goals and outcomes have obscured the ways in which the program actually functions consistently between the stated goals of the policy and the ways that bureaucrats select and process participants through the program.

Despite the active state support, the Compatriots Resettlement Program was widely criticized. Initially the program was quite ineffective, only after including more regions, immigrants could move to more developed regions of the state. The Federal Migration Service report that the amount of resettled people raised to 80,000 in 2012, and to 200,000 people by 2014 (Myhre 2017), while in accordance to reports of the National Statistics Committee in 2012 only 31,300 people, and 53,000 people in 2014 got their citizenship via the Compatriots Resettlement Program. Inadequacies of the program's design likely contributed to these lower-than-expected numbers, including not considering the regional demands of the territories that were included in the program, the limitation of regional budgets in assisting the people who resettle, and the economic backwardness of the territories that were included (Mukomel 2008). During first years after the start of the Compatriots Resettlement Program, rates of the applications did not exceed 1% of the total amount of the people who go through the naturalization process (Chudinovskih 2018). The program was widely considered a failure (Press Conference with Putin 2013). While there was an increase in effectiveness after the annexation of Crimea, larger numbers of participants started to wane by 2015, and thus the vitality of the program was rather exceptional and temporary (Schenk

2016). Besides the criticism on the macro level, individual experiences of people that participated in the program had negative connotations regarding the high level of bureaucratic issues on the stage of implementation (Myhre 2018).

In this thesis, based on the interviews with migrants and experts, I argue that the program provides the fastest track for the naturalization of people in Russia and the way it is implemented works for ordinary people who are applying to Russian citizenship. Thus, the presence of drawbacks in the Compatriots Resettlement Program and the high level of bureaucracy in the state does not drastically increase the gap between the way policy was designed and the way it is implemented in practice, because people were able to obtain the citizenship and report to be satisfied with the results of participation in the program.

Research Design.

Methodology.

My main method of data collection is in-depth semi-structured interviews with people who applied to the process of getting the Russian citizenship via both types of procedure: the standard way of naturalization and the Compatriots Resettlement Program. Additional method of data collection was the in depth interviews with experts in the migration policy of the Russian Federation.

In order to have more comprehensive outcomes of the study, I have interviewed two groups of people: fifteen people from the standard procedure of naturalization, and twelve people that got their citizenship through the Compatriots Resettlement Program. The amount depends on my ability to recruit people. In-depth semi-structured interviews helped me to analyze people's experiences and problems that they faced in the process of the obtaining the citizenship, and helped to figure out the most salient issues that applicants encounter. Interviews consisted of six main questions, which were basically asking about the experience of people while being involved in the process of getting citizenship. Due to the territorial

limitation, I have conducted the interviews via social networks, in particular through calls in Whatsapp and Skype.

The process of recruitment of people was complicated primarily by the fact of the remoteness of my participants. The absence of face to face contact made it difficult to establish the trustful relationships, and as the result many of the potential candidates that I tried to recruit from my personal networks have refused form participation. Main reasons for the refusal were the fear of negative consequences on their well-being from the side of government, despite the fact that I was explaining them that the study is voluntary. Most of the participants were from the snow-balls that have started from my personal connections. This technique allowed me to make my sample more diverse, because I was able to get information from different people with different experiences. Thus I was given a good reference from the people that I knew and participants were less afraid to share their stories. Some people were hesitant to answer the sensitive questions regarding the issues like corruption and relations with other ethnic groups. In cases when I knew my participants in person and had the experience of the face to face contact before the interview, people were more open in comparison with the people who were recruited later through other participants. Thus, prior personal contacts with people helped me to discover more details about the practical implementation of the migration policy that were beyond the formal rules of the implementation.

I have also conducted in-depth semi-structured with experts. The interviews lasted approximately one hour each. I have asked six main questions that were directed at understanding the effectiveness and main issues of Migration policy of Russian Federation. I spoke with Sergey Ryazantsev – leading specialist in the demography and migration studies at the Russian academy of Sciences; and the Marthe Handa Myhre - Doctoral Research Fellow - Russland, Sentral-Europa og Balkan; Galina Rogozina – the Chairman of the public

organization of migrants "Kazakhstan community in Voronezh", a member of the International Public Movement for Assistance to Migrants and Their Associations "Forum of Migrant Organizations"; Lauren Woodard - PhD candidate in anthropology at the University of Massachusetts-Amherst, who conducted a field work in Russia with the participants of Compatriot program. These interviews were helpful for putting the policy analysis of Russian nationalism in perspective and understanding the gap between nationalist discourse and the policy and implementation of the compatriot program.

As it was mentioned above, the main method of recruitment was the snow-balling technique, which was based on my personal connections and the connections of my thesis adviser. I have started several snow-balls with the participants that went through different procedures of naturalization, in particular the standard procedure and the Compatriots Resettlement Program; in different regions of the Russian Federation. The time frames for my study begin in 2007, after the start of the Compatriots Resettlement Program till present time. I limited my sample to those who had gained citizenship after 2007, whether through the compatriot program or standard procedure.

The recruitment of experts was less complicated due to the fact that they were built mainly on the personal and professional connections of my thesis adviser – Caress Schenk. The main complexity was the fact that Russian experts were hesitating to comment on the questions related to the policy of Russian government, thus I had to skip some of the questions prepared in advance. I consider that this was the case due to the absence of the face to face contact, which was one of the major drawbacks during the process of the data collection, because building of trustful relations between the interviewer and interviewee with the limited prior knowledge about each other complicates the development of the conversation, especially in situations when the topic was sensitive.

For the analysis of the collected data initially I used the open coding (Merriam and Tisdell 2016), labeling the main ideas sentence by sentence, and listed the main codes that appeared from the data, for example, “difficult to find housing”, “long lines”, etc. The next stage was the Axial coding (Merriam and Tisdell 2016), during which I have thematically combined the labels into the categories that were helpful for answering my research question.

The secondary data that I used in my work was the systematic analysis of the legal framework such as the Federal Law On Migration; Presidential Decrees; Decrees of Government of Russian Federation, Compatriot Resettlement Program, and the Federal Law on Citizenship. I also analyzed the regional requirements for the implementation of the Compatriots Resettlement Program from six regions of Russia, which I selected based on the fact that my participants went through the process of naturalization there.

Ethical Considerations.

Current research involved the work with human subjects; therefore I had to obtain the permission of the Institutional Research Ethics Committee of the Nazarbayev University. After I got the permission I have started to collect my data by conducting in-depth interviews with participants and experts. The study focused on the people defined in Russian Federal Law on Citizenship” as “compatriots” and people who went through the process of obtaining the Russian citizenship via both the standard procedure for naturalization and the Compatriots Resettlement Program. I used the oral form of the consent, thus I kept a minimum amount of personal data. I could not preserve total anonymity due to my method of recruitment, however the only document that I contains personal data is the list of names of my participants that is kept separately on my personal computer and is password protected. I did not use the personal information of my participants anywhere in my work, the exception from the group of the experts because they preferred to indicate their names. Before I proceed for the interviewing process, I made sure that the participants understand the purpose of my

research and that the participation in the study is voluntary, and they could refuse to take part in it at any moment without any negative consequences for them.

Chapter Outline.

This chapter introduced the main idea of current research project by stating that there is always disconnect between the way state frames migration policy and actual implementation of it. Here I have indicated that current research tries to address two major gaps in the migration policy of the Russian Federation, in particular. First, the difference between the ways Russian Government frames the attraction of compatriots in a cultural manner and the economic and demographic pragmatism of the policy. Second, the gap between the policy and its implementation, where I have indicated that despite of the criticism of the Compatriots Resettlement Program, the gap between the way policy was designed and its implementation is not that wide, because the program provides the fastest track for naturalization and people are satisfied with the procedure.

The second chapter focuses on the gap between the rhetoric on compatriots, embedded in an ethnic vision of nationalism, and the design of the compatriot policy. First, the chapter reviews the ways in which different national ideas impact migration policies in different countries. Then it provides a detailed analysis of the role of nationalism in the development of migration policy in Russia. The chapter then turns to a discussion of the policies governing the Compatriot Resettlement Program, demonstrating that there is a gap between the official discourse on compatriots, based on ethnic nationalism, and the way the policy is actually designed.

The third chapter provides the detailed explanation of the evolution of the migration legislation in Russia based on the Federal Laws, Presidential Decrees, Decrees of the Government of Russian Federation. It also considers and the secondary literature and experts' opinions about the political drivers resulting in the changes in the legislation. The chapter

includes an explanation of the legal procedures that people go through on the way of getting citizenship, as well as an analysis of the major amendments that were introduced in the legislation, in particular, basic benefits of the Compatriots Resettlement Program over the standard procedure of naturalization, and the drawbacks of the program.

Chapter four focuses on findings from the interviews with participants of both standard naturalization procedure and the participants of the Compatriots Resettlement Program. The chapter shows that the practical implementation of the citizenship policy in Russia is problematic due to the underdevelopments in the legislation and the regional implementation. Nevertheless, despite the difficulties that people encounter during the process of naturalization, the Compatriots Resettlement Program shows the positive results in its implementation and in fact provides people the fastest access to the citizenship. Thus, it shows that despite the widespread criticism of the program, the gap between the policy and its implementation is not that drastic and policy works for ordinary people.

Chapter five provides concluding remarks for this work, summarizes the findings of the paper, based on my argument, and explains the potential prospects for the future research that could be done in the sphere.

Chapter 2. The Implementation Gap in Russian Migration Policy.

Following chapter elaborates on the theoretical framework of this paper; in particular it focuses on the explanation of the gap between the official rhetoric of the state and the design of migration policy based on the example of Russian Federation. First, it will explain how the type of national identity of the state impacts its migration policy. Then it proceeds to the explanation of how nationalism affected the development of migration policy in Russia. In the final section of this chapter, based on the interviews with experts on Russian nationalism and migration, and the analysis of regional requirements of participation in Compatriots Resettlement Program, I will present evidence for my argument, which states that there is the gap between the official discourse concerning migration policy in Russia and the way the policy is designed in practice.

As stated in previous chapter, the control over migration is a key priority of modern states, because while migration may bring benefits such as increased human resources to the state, migration flows can also be regarded as a threat to the stability and integrity of the country (Duvell 2005). Designing immigration policy is a crucial moment for the state because it must balance between conflicting economic, international, and cultural interests of the country (Rosenblum and Cornelius 2012, Boucher and Gest 2018). For example, the increasing demand for migrants in industrial democracies forced states towards greater openness for migrant communities while domestic pressure (e.g. the extreme right anti migrant parties) pushed for the closure of borders (Hollifield 2004). However, there is no universal narrative for designing migration policies, rather each state focuses on own regime's environment and history (Boucher and Gest 2018).

Some countries prioritize economic considerations, while others preference identity as the main driving factor in designing their migration policies. The literature differentiates between two types of states, which preference the identity considerations in migration:

nations of immigrants and countries of immigration (Hollifield et al. 2014). Nations of immigrants are the states where the founding myth of the state is based on the immigration of people, for example, Canada and the United States. National identity in these countries is based on the idea that integrated migrants become a part of the nation. The fact that the national identity in these states is built around the idea of immigration does not mean that these states always maintained the open border policies. On the contrary, the rise of political debates over uncontrolled migration led to the adoption of stricter migration policies (Hollifield et al. 2014). For example, the United States tried to mitigate public opinion by suggesting to the public policies of stricter control over the illegal migration flows, or controlling the “unwanted” immigration (Cornelius 2005); whereas in Canada they introduced the “point system” of admission of migrants, where they attract people based on their education and skills that suit the long term-labor interests of the state (Reitz 2014).

Another type of states are the countries of immigration, where the immigration of people is present, however, it is not the fundamental idea around which the identity of the country is built (Hollifield et al. 2014). Thus, in these countries, immigration conflicts with already-established ideas of national identity. One of the main characteristics of these countries is that the majority of migrants there are recruited temporarily with lesser prospect for further naturalization in these states (Hollifield et al. 2014). Thus, for example, in Germany, the admission of migrants was one of the main priorities of the state; nevertheless, the prospect of future naturalization of these people was limited because of the nationality law based on the right of descent (Martin 2014). A huge influx of migrants in the country was followed by the rise of xenophobia based on the idea that these immigrants are the unwanted permanent residents that are associated, which forced the government to the increase in control of migration flows that will target labor migrants in accordance to economic demands of the state (Martin 2014).

Due to the constant need to balance between conflicting demands, there is almost always the gap between policy and its practical implementation, thus the migration policies have more sort of symbolic role (Hollifield et al. 2014), which means that it allows the state to balance between public opinion and the implementation of policies that may not meet stated goals. The literature defines several types of gaps in the effectiveness of migration policies: between the official discourse of the government and the content of the policies, the gap between the policies and their practical implementation, and the difference between the implementation and outcomes (Czaika and de Haas 2013). The first type of gap, the discursive gap, refers to the situation where there is substantial difference between the discourses of government and actual policies that are presented on forms of laws. The second type, the implementation gap, refers to the situation when laws are not fully implemented due to the formal and informal constraints. The last type, the efficacy gap indicates to what extent the policies had the effect that was initially targeted by the government.

In this chapter I will explain the gap that appears due to the existence of the difference between the policy and its practical implementation. However, before proceeding to the assessment of the gap in the Russian migration policy, it is important to define the role of the nationalism in the Russian Federation, since Russia as well as other European states is considered as the country of immigration, where the national idea plays crucial role in the process of the policy formation.

Nationalism in the Russian Federation.

The case of Russia shows that sustaining the social contract between the government and the people is to great extent depends on the ideas of patriotism and nationalism (Laruelle 2019). The main idea of the social contract in Russia is based on the attempt of the government to produce legitimacy and avoiding any major social backlashes (Schenk 2018a). Thus, in exchange for the loyalty of the population, government tries to provide the

prosperity and stability for the people. However, in cases when public becomes unsatisfied with activities of the government, elites use the rhetoric as a tool for pacification of the public. (Schenk 2018a). Therefore, it is crucial to discuss the role of nationalism and the discourse related to the national idea in Russia as one of the main driving forces that shapes the process of migration policymaking in the country.

Nationalism is an ideology and social and political movement interested in studying the evolution of human societies (Ozкимli 2010), which explained the role of ideology in the process of state building.¹ The theoretical framework of nationalism shaped the emergence of two large ideal types of nationalism in states: civic and ethnic (Brubaker 1992, Brubaker 1999, Shulman 2002). They differentiate by parameters of inclusion of people to their national communities. Ethnic nationalism emphasizes the role of common ancestry (real or mythical) among those in the nation, emphasizing factors like linguistic, religious and cultural identities shared among the group (Brubaker 1992, Roshwald 2016). Civic nationalism puts emphasis on political identity (citizenship) in a state, which creates the identity irrespective of the cultural differences (Brubaker 1992, Roshwald 2016). However, both ideal types of nationalism received a lot of criticism, in a sense that they are useful for the creation of the framework for the analytical distinctions, but at the same time they are far from the reality primarily due to their inability to capture the complexity of nationalisms that are present in modern states (Brubaker 1999, Kymlicka 2001, Brubaker 2004, Roshwald 2016).

¹ Theorist developed three main approaches to the study of nationalism. The primordialist approach suggests that nations are indispensable parts of human nature, and nations exist from the beginning of time (Ozкимli 2010). Another major dimension in the study of nationalism is modernism, which emerged as a criticism to primordialism, by emphasizing the modern origin of nations. Most scholars agree that the majority of states currently possess the characteristics of modern states, which means that they possess defined territories and create a sense of belonging to the “imagined communities” (Hobsbawm 1990, Hutchinson and Smith 1994, Anderson 2006, Gellner 2006). The third major approach to nationalism is the ethno-symbolist approach, which emerged as a criticism of the modernist theoretical framework, emphasizing in their criticism the importance of the pre-modern types of communities and their impact on the formation of the modern states (Ozкимli 2010).

Despite the fact that the creation of an official ideology of the state is prohibited in Russian Constitution (Article 13) since 1993 (the Constitution of the Russian Federation), we can trace several types of the nationalisms which were applied by the ruling elites in the Russian Federation.

Laruelle (2009) argues that there are many different nationalisms in Russia, however three distinct types of the nationalism are the most prominent: ethnic, civic and the “Greater Russian” nationalism, latter goes beyond frames of ideal types of nationalism. The “ethnic Russian” nationalism focuses on the state building around the core Russian ethnic group. Whereas, the civic nationalism, or “Rossiyane” nationalism, tries to create political community of all ethnic groups within borders of the Federation. The “Greater Russian nationalism”, which is focused on the restoration of borders of the Soviet Union or the Russian Empire.

Tolz (2001) expands the above classification by adding two more types of Russian nationalism: Russian-speakers and Eastern Slavs. The community of Russian-speakers targets the unification of people of the post-Soviet or Imperial legacy, with the language as the basis for the unification. The nationalism Eastern Slavs refers to the common origin and the cultural similarities of Slavic people as the sources of the national identity.

Majority of these categories possess features of ethnic nationalism, however are far from the ideal type of it (Shevel 2011). All of these types of nationalisms have potential drawbacks and opponents do not agree on a single policy course (Tolz 2001), therefore from the recent history of Russia we can see that the government is constantly maneuvering between different types of the nationalisms in accordance to the interests of the state. By emphasizing a particular type of nationalism, the government maneuvers in attempt to preserve the social contract with public. Thus, in order to sustain the legitimacy, the government responds to the societal pressure and the rising anti-migrant sentiments by

developing the discourse on ethnic nationalism and creating the group, which is prioritized for the immigration. In the next section, I will elaborate on how changes in the nationalism of Russia resulted in the subsequent changes in the legislation of the state, and how this change affected the emergence of the prioritized group for the immigration.

Defining a Group in Priority: the Role of Discourse on Compatriots in the Russian Social Contract.

In the process of defining the national ideology of the country, the government of the Russian Federation maneuvers between different types of nationalisms listed above in accordance with the current priorities in policymaking. We can observe the way the policymaking in sphere of migration was adjusted to the current political vision of the government in attempt to preserve the social contract with the society by analyzing how the compatriot policy developed.

In the aftermath of the dissolution of USSR, Russia became one of the countries that faced mass migration both into and out of the country (Kolstoe 1995, Laitin 1998). Huge influx of people in the conditions of lack of national ideology created debates over the nationalism of the state (Kolste 1995, Pain 2018, Ponarin and Komin 2018). Oppositional groups insisted on the ethno-nationalist vision of the state, emphasizing the fact that 80% of Russian population were ethnic Russians, and demanded the recognition of this ethnic group as the state-forming, that will allow controlling the migration. It would also allow them to intervene in the affairs of the states with large Russian ethnic groups claiming the “Responsibility to protect those people” (Kolstoe 1995, Shevel 2011). Nevertheless, Yetlsin’s vision of the state as the civic was dominant in the process of policymaking (Kolstoe 1995). But in order to mitigate opposition and prevent political destabilization and rise of xenophobia from the huge influx of migrants, state was actively articulating the rhetoric of

protecting of the Diaspora abroad with the special emphasis on the Compatriots - people who are inherently bound to Russia, which was stated in the Law on Compatriots² (Shevel 2011).

Migration policy of the state at that time was liberal: the law on Citizenship, which was adopted in 1991, was already welcome to accept all Soviet citizens that decided to get Russian citizenship (Shevel 2008). The role of compatriots in the official discourse was used mainly to satisfy imperial ambitions of nationalist groups in Russia, and was used to refer to all former Soviet citizens in Russian citizenship (Shevel 2008).

After Putin became president in 2000, at the initial stages of his presidency he continued the same trend in the discourse as Yeltsin did. The main focus of his politics on the initial stage was the creation of the multiethnic or “civic” national identity (Ponarin and Komin 2018). His vision of nationalism was explained in the “Russia at the turn of the millennium” article, where he emphasized the fact that he is against of the creation of official ideology (Putin 1999). At the same time, he proclaimed the creation and development of patriotic programs oriented on the development of the “Rossiisky” civic identity, which is supposed to unite citizens in one “*ediniy narod*”, or unified nation/people (Brookfield 2012, Shevel 2011).

Changes in the legislation started to take place after 2001, when in response to the security concerns government in Russia introduced new migration legislation (Schenk 2018a). The provision of citizenship became stricter after acceptance of the “Law on Citizenship” in 2002. The law was primarily targeting the citizenship within Russian

² Compatriots are persons born in one state, which are residing in it and possessing signs of common language, history, cultural heritage, traditions and customs, as well as the descendants of these persons in a straight line of descent. Compatriots are also recognized as persons and their descendants who live outside the territory of the Russian Federation and, as a rule, belong to peoples historically living on the territory of the Russian Federation, as well as those who made a free choice in favor of spiritual, cultural and legal ties with the Russian Federation whose relatives in the direct ascending line previously lived on the territory of the Russian Federation, including: persons who were citizenship of the USSR, residing in the states that were part of the USSR, who acquired the citizenship of these states or who became stateless persons; immigrants from the Russian state, the Russian Republic, the RSFSR, the USSR and the Russian Federation, who had the appropriate citizenship and became citizens of a foreign state or stateless persons.

territory, providing less support to the resettlement of the people from other states (Shevel 2011).

Emphasis on the Compatriots in the discourse declined: during the TV show “Pryamaya Liniya s Prezidentom” (Online with the President) in 2001, where Putin was answering people’s questions, his reply on the questions concerning the citizenship was: “I think, that the period of time when we supported the refugees is over. All, who wanted to resettle to Russia for permanent stay, already did it... with little exception”. Thus, the category of Compatriots in the official discourse of the new government was made obsolete and resulted in the exclusion of ethnic repatriates as a category receiving special treatment in the migration policy of the country.

Pressure from NGO’s,³ increase in xenophobia that Russia experienced in 2006 (Verkhovsky 2009), and the fact that by 2007 55% of the population were sympathetic with ideas of ethnic nationalism (Brookfield 2012), affected the government, showing that the identity issues should attract more attention. Putin started to rebuild his nationalism in more ethnic direction, which would allow balancing between the multiethnic nature of Russia and to some extent create special attitude for ethnic Russians (Ponarin and Komin 2018).

Changes in the nationalism were followed by the change in the migration policy: the introduction of the Compatriots Resettlement Program, which was supposed to become the main priority of the migration policy (Shevel 2011). Later amendments to the “Law on Compatriots” excluded the unwanted categories of migrants by reducing the group to those historically and culturally bound to the Russia (Suslov 2017). We cannot state that the term “compatriot” focuses exclusively on ethnic bonds, rather in the literature, it was emphasized that the term is vague and can include variety of categories in accordance to the current priorities of the state (Schenk 2016, Myhre 2017); however some authors argue that the

³ Rogozina, Galina. 2019, Interview by Xeniya Kryakvina. Nur-Sultan, Kazakhstan.

category is ethnic (Knott 2017). But, as we can judge from the official statements of Putin (Putin 2018), the state prioritizes the return of “people, regardless of nationality or religion, bound by blood with the Russian World” to their “historic homeland” (Putin 2018). The rise of anti migrant populist discourses in the society and clashes with migrant communities that took place in 2012, which became a basis for the new more ethicized social contract (Teper 2018), coincided with the declaring of the Compatriots Resettlement Program as permanent. In 2014 the program was used in the process of integration of Ukrainian refugees, which again showed the emphasis on the ethnic component of the migration policy. The role of Compatriots was again declared in the priority while designing the New Concept of Migration Policy of the Russian Federation (2018), where the state ignored the potential of work migrants from Central Asia by devoting the central role to the Slavic groups of immigrants.

Hence, we can see that the social contract in Russia in regards to the migration policy, as well as in other countries of immigration is dependent on the social perceptions of the community. Therefore, the nationalism is the important variable that determines the way the migration policy of the state can be framed; however, it can be mitigated in accordance to the priorities of the state. In case of Russian Federation, nationalism was crucial variable in determining the selection of group in priority that will help to address concerns of the population over the migration policy of the state. By making the Compatriots the priority of the migration policy, state was able to show define the group in priority for the immigration, which will be suitable to the demands of the population. However, the ambiguousness of the category of Compatriot and the Federal structure of the state allowed the government to make the Compatriots Resettlement Program more pragmatic and economy-oriented, which creates the discursive gap in the migration policy of the Russian Federation.

Pragmatism in Russian Migration Policy. How were the Compatriots defined while implementing the Program?

In this section, based on the interview with experts and the analysis of regional requirements for the admission to the Compatriots Resettlement Program, I will show that there is a gap between the discourse of the government and the design of the policy, by explaining that the cultural variables that started to appear in the official discourse and the changes in legislation that took place, in fact did not affect the design of policies, which are stated in a pragmatic manner.

As it was mentioned earlier in this work, the term Compatriot is broadly defined in Russian legislation and covers the great variety of groups that can be included in this notion (Federal Law N-99). The absence of a clear definition created space for debates over inclusion in this category, thus the policy of the Resettlement of Compatriots did not have a clear direction in terms of a civic or ethnic interpretation. Lack of agreement and the ambiguity over the definition allowed the government in Russia to emphasize the practical use of the category of Compatriots, thus escaping the issues associated with defining the boundaries of the state (Shevel 2012). Combined with the fact that the local administration in the Regions can set the additional criteria while implementing the Compatriots Resettlement Program (Mukomel 2008), we can see that despite the rising emphasis on the cultural variable in the migration policy the government of Russia in fact is organizing a pragmatic policy which is targeting groups that will satisfy the economic demand of the state.

Above, it was explained that despite the general civic rhetoric of the Russian government towards the inclusion of citizens, and in particular defining the Compatriots, in the recent period, especially after the annexation of Crimea, government statements started to include more ethnic categories. However, experts I interviewed did not agree that government

rhetoric became increasingly ethnic and argued that the process of implementation, the policy in Russia did not consider ethnicity as a determining factor for migrants seeking citizenship.

Civil society and the grassroots organizations in Russia were actively advocating the development of repatriation components of the Migration Legislation, in particular on redefining the definition of the term of compatriots in a more narrow sense. One expert commented that:

...those who were living in the USSR are passing away... and the new generation does not have anything in common with the USSR...well, it is possible to define it based on *jus soli* or *jus sanguine*, but the ethnic identity of many people is not defined, so it is not understandable whether the Russian is identified as pure blood Russian or has mixed blood...⁴

Nevertheless, other experts argue that the views of Putin remain more inclusive (Schenk 2018b), and the category of compatriots for him can potentially cover all the representatives of all the post-Soviet space.⁵ Such inclusivity can be explained by the fact that the government has to balance between the need for higher migration rates and the rising xenophobia in society:

They need migration because of the demographic crisis, which especially affects the working age of the population... and the way Russian authorities have framed it discursively, they are not attracting migrants; they are attracting 'brothers' and 'compatriots': people who already belong in Russia... and the population is partly willing to accept this...⁶

Some of the citizen respondents from my project also raised the issue of ethnic preferences. They were complaining about the fact that people from the Compatriots Resettlement Program experienced the same conditions as representatives of other ethnic

⁴ Rogozina, Galina. 2019, Interview by Xeniya Kryakvina. Nur-Sultan, Kazakhstan.

⁵ Rogozina, Galina. 2019, Interview by Xeniya Kryakvina. Nur-Sultan, Kazakhstan.

⁶ Myhre, Marthe. 2019, Interview by Xeniya Kryakvina. Nur-Sultan, Kazakhstan.

groups,⁷ the absence of special treatment for ethnic Russians negatively affected their expectations from the process of naturalization:

...I return to my historical motherland and stand equally with those who were sending me back to Russia [representatives of other ethnic groups in post-Soviet states]. This is totally wrong. I think that titular nations, in this case ethnic Russians should not be subject to lines. As they pass, then others can go. This is not discrimination, many states practice this and sometimes in an open manner. But here they try to pretend tolerance...⁸

From these sorts of statements we can observe that the population defines the category of compatriots in ethnic frames, which in most cases is narrowed down to ethnic Russians as those that most deserve the title of compatriot. However, the way in which the policy is implemented does not define compatriots in ethnic terms.

Because the policy is ambiguously stated, it allows the government to maneuver the Program in a pragmatic, rather than ethnic, way. Thus, when defining the purpose of the program Putin stated that the main priority would be economic: “we will accept those whom we need and where we need...”⁹

The inconsistent focus on economic and cultural needs created the space for the flexibility of the local administration to define the priorities of the local migration policies as well.

Comparing the regional requirements of the Compatriots Resettlement Program, I offer support for the argument about the pragmatic nature of the policy. I have compared the requirements of six regions from which the participants of this project come (with the exception of the Smolensk oblast, which no longer participates in the program) and came to the conclusion that the main priority of the state policy was the economic demand of the

⁷ 27. 2019, Interview by Xeniya Kryakvina. Nur-Sultan, Kazakhstan.

⁸ 2. 2019, Interview by Xeniya Kryakvina. Nur-Sultan, Kazakhstan.

⁹ Rogozina, Galina. 2019, Interview by Xeniya Kryakvina. Nur-Sultan, Kazakhstan.

regions and the most common requirement is work experience and a profession that is demanded by the local economic situation (Russian Embassy in Kazakhstan). (see Table 1)

The most frequently requirement was the availability of positions for people of particular professions in the regions. Thus, people were expected to be trained for the particular profession that was in demand in the labor market of the region. Another salient category was the possession of higher or professional education of the participant and his family members. Again, the priority was given to the qualifications (i.e. higher education training) that were important for the regional labor market.

Table 1. The Regional Requirements for the application to Compatriots Resettlement Program.

| Region | Cultural Variables ¹⁰ | Age restrictions | Vacancies available in the Region | Work Experience | Education and Qualifications |
|-------------|----------------------------------|------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------|------------------------------|
| Kemerovo | + | | + | + | + |
| Amur | + | | + | | |
| Primorye | | + | | + | |
| Lipetsk | + | | + | + | + |
| Voronezh | | + | + | | + |
| Kaliningrad | + | + | + | + | + |

One of the major drawbacks of the program is that it operates only in the regions that have the lowest levels of economic development in the country (Mukomel 2008); therefore, it was problematic for the state to make people remain in the region after they get citizenship. One of the ways of persuading people to stay was to require them to keep permanent residence for three years upon accepting the financial support from the side of the state. The other way was created by local administrations of some of the regions. Basically, they demanded that people work in the region for some period before citizenship is granted. For example, in Kaliningrad oblast they demand three months, while in Kemerovo oblast, six

¹⁰ Cultural variables are knowledge of Russian language and familiarity with Russian culture.

months (Russian Embassy in Kazakhstan). Thus, people have to remain in the region for a longer period of time before being able to get citizenship.

Another interesting category that appeared from the data was the age requirement. Three regions out of six required the applicants to be within working age.¹¹ In Kaliningrad oblast local authorities listed the age of retirement as one of the reasons for the refusal for participation in the Compatriots Resettlement Program (Russian Embassy in Kazakhstan). The administration of the Primorskiy Kray went further and stated the age limit for the participation from 18 to 30 years (Russian Embassy in Kazakhstan).

In some regions, the administration indicated that while considering the applications, preference would be given to the people who can find housing on their own. For example, in Voronezh and the Lipetsk oblasts the possibility to solve housing issues on their own was one of the major criteria for a successful application. In Kemerovo oblast it was indicated that priority would be given to people who have the potential to get a better paying job, due to the fact that they will have more chances to pay-off the bank credits for the accommodation (Russian Embassy in Kazakhstan).

Cultural variables were less crucial in the data. Despite the salience of the issue of knowledge of Russian language in the Russian migration legislation, not all the regions set this as the requirement for the application. In particular Amur and Voronezh oblasts did not mention the fluency in Russian as the necessary condition (Russian Embassy in Kazakhstan). Two regions pointed out the connections of the applicants with Russian culture as the requirement; however, there was no clear reference to the ethnic ties, in exception for Russian language.

In this project I could not find people who have been rejected from the participation in the Compatriots Resettlement Program. However, from the interviews with experts I could

¹¹ Working age in Russia is between 18 and 60 for women, and 18 and 63 for men.

figure out that in some cases the main reasons for rejection were the professional qualities, not associated with the ethnicity of the people:

I did my fieldwork in the administration in Primorskiy Krai, I did interviews there, and they did not preference the ethnic Russians. Those who are working in these centers are middle-aged or older, they were talking about their time in the military when they were together with all these people from all over the Soviet Union... they did not really preference anyone and this is true that the Compatriots program emphasizes profession: you see that there are some people who are rejected in some regions that are accepted in others... and this is because their regions do not have their professions.¹²

Another factor that influences the rejection of applications in the regions is the changes in the structure of the migration services.¹³ The functions of Ministry of Internal Affairs and the Federal Migration Services now became closely integrated, inability of the former to deal with the amount of work that was previously done by the separate agency results in the problems with the implementation of the Program:

...it is all now controlled by the Ministry of Internal Affairs, which stated that the country does not need a large number of migrants, especially because the number of workers in the Federal Migration Service was decreased by 30% and the most qualified people left. Thus, they decided to decrease quotas [for temporary residence permit] and set more requirements for the Participation in the Compatriots Resettlement Program. In Voronezh 80% of applications were rejected because they [Ministry of Internal Affairs] state that they will accept only little amount of people to minimize lines...¹⁴

Conclusion

Despite the general rhetoric and the perceptions of people concerning the meaning of the notion of Compatriot is cultural, or based on Russian or Slavic ethnicity or Russian language abilities, in fact the state is targeting the specific aim of the economic development of the regions that participate in the Program. Beginning with the vision of the Putin on the

¹² Woodard, Lauren. 2019, Interview by Xeniya Kryakvina. Nur-Sultan, Kazakhstan.

¹³ In 2016 structural changes in the Russian government were made: the Federal Migration Service was dissolved, and the migration control is now conducted by the Ministry of Internal Affairs.

¹⁴ Rogozina, Galina. 2019, Interview by Xeniya Kryakvina. Nur-Sultan, Kazakhstan.

allocation of people according to the economic demands, and looking at the regional requirements for participation that attempt to set the economic priorities for the acceptance to the Program, we can see the trend for the pragmatic selection. The state is searching for the people of working age, that possess the specific educational and working qualifications, that are able to find the accommodation on their own without imposing the additional burden on the regional budget. Further evidence for this is the reasons for the rejections for the participation in the Compatriots Resettlement Program, which are built around economic variables, like the availability of vacancies for people. Thus, the various ways a compatriot can be defined, either as an ethnic Russian, Slav or simply as someone who comes from the countries of the former Soviet Union, allows the state to foster economic migration and at the same time sustain the social balance, in particular decrease the xenophobia associated with the influx of non-Slavic migrants.

In the following chapters I will further provide evidence that the implementation gap in the migration policy of Russia is not large, like the discursive gap. I will try to address the criticism in the implementation of the Compatriots Resettlement Program by arguing that despite the underdevelopments in the policy, the program works for ordinary people and provides the fastest route of naturalization for migrants.

Chapter 3. The Evolution of the Migration and Citizenship Legislation in Russia.

In the previous chapter, I have indicated that there is the gap between the official discourse of the Russian Government and the way the migration policy, in particular, the Compatriots Resettlement Program, is present in the form of laws. In current research project, I argue that the increased economic demand of the state that created the discursive gap between the official rhetoric and the content of migration policy, fostered the implementation of the migration legislation in Russia, thus closed the implementation gap, while scholars and policymakers were arguing that the gap exists and the Compatriots Resettlement Program was considered as ineffective. The success in the implementation of the Compatriots Resettlement Program becomes more obvious if we compare its' implementation with the way the standard procedure of naturalization is conducted. Therefore, in order to make a more valid assessment of the implementation, it is crucial to understand the way law was evolved and what are the procedures of naturalization.

Above, I have presented the theoretical framework that suggests that with the development of nationalism of the Russian Federation since 2006 started to move in the dimension of broader support to the compatriots, thus defining them as a prioritized group for the inclusion in the society. However, this official support met with the criticism while implementing the policies; in particular the Compatriots Resettlement Program was considered as ineffective.

In the following chapter, I will explain the evolution of the migration and citizenship laws in the Russian Federation based on the major changes in the legislation, and major amendments that were made, and potential reasons that triggered the changes. Then, I will proceed to the comparison between the standard naturalization procedures and the Compatriots Resettlement Program. In the end of chapter I will present the analysis of the benefits and disadvantages of the Compatriots Resettlement Program and will show that it

provides advantages to the people who decide to go through the process of naturalization, in particular it shows to be the fastest way for obtaining Russian citizenship and diminishes the amount of bureaucratic burden, at the same time it has drawbacks such as the underdevelopment and the remoteness of the regions that participate in the Compatriots Resettlement Program.

The Evolution of the Law.

The law “On Citizenship” of the Russian Federation was adopted in 1991 (Shevel 2008). It was considered liberal because it allowed simplified access to Russian citizenship for all of the citizens of USSR. The law regarded all the population of former Soviet Union permanently living in Russia as Russian citizens, as long as they did not officially show their unwillingness to be Russian citizens within one year of the law coming into force (article 13.1). The main requirement for naturalization was permanent residence in the newly established Russian Federation for 3 to 5 years (Federal Law N 1948-I, 1991, article 19.2). The main procedure necessary for getting citizenship, therefore, was obtaining the permanent registration, or “*propiska*” (Shevel 2008). The moment when the person obtained this document was the start of the period of permanent residence in Russia. This liberal approach to migration control was a consequence of the dire political situation of that time. Russia needed to facilitate access to citizenship for large groups of people that were moving to Russia from the former Soviet states. Therefore, by fostering the access to citizenship, the state avoided massive statelessness (Shevel 2012). These conditions fostered the naturalization of between 400,000 and 700,000 people from 1993 to 2002 (Chudinovskih 2018).

This system of the provision of citizenship had many potential drawbacks, including a large gap between federal and regional legislation and implementation of the policy (Light 2016), huge uncontrolled migration flows, criminalization and the rise of xenophobia

(Mukomel 2005). All these factors were the basis for reorganizing the migration and citizenship legislation of Russia in the 2000s.

The changes took place in early 2000's, when under the pressure of the President's administration, the Russian Parliament accepted the new law On Citizenship (Federal Law No.62, 2002) (Mukomel 2008). The law made it more difficult for citizens of Post-Soviet states to be eligible for the citizenship (Light 2016). Now the policymakers expanded the list of criteria by setting the requirement for the proof of a legal income source, the renouncement of previous citizenship, and having a sufficient level of fluency in Russian language (Federal Law N 62, 2002, article 13.1). The timing for the application increased up to five years since the moment of getting the permanent residence permit "*vid na zhitelstvo*" (Law Federal Law N 62, 2002, article 13.1). The permanent residence permit is similar to the permanent residence, or "*propiska*", in previous legislation (Shevel 2008). The law did not remain in its initial form for long; the pressure of Parliament and societal organizations could influence the government, and several simplified procedures that allowed faster access to the Russian citizenship were introduced in 2003; however these amendments were pragmatically oriented, targeting high skilled migrants and military personnel rather than general Post-Soviet citizens (Shevel 2012). The increasingly strict criteria for application drastically decreased the amount of successful applications (Shevel 2012).

The priority of the government in the 2003 amendments was the reconstruction of the migration policy in the more centralized manner, so regions were less independent from Moscow in the process of decision making (Mukomel 2008), rather than the facilitation of migration. In general, this approach was received with wide criticism from the side of governmental opposition and civil society. The demographic demand of Russia for attracting more migrants was accompanied by the rise of xenophobia in the regions (Mukomel 2005).

Starting from 2005 policy of the state now was moving in two directions: to attract qualified labor and to simplify of the naturalization of compatriots (Mukomel 2008).

Table 2. The Number of Naturalized Citizens in the Russian Federation from 2007 to 2017 (National Statistics Committee). (in thousands)

| Procedure | 2007 | 2008 | 2009 | 2010 | 2011 | 2012 | 2013 | 2014 | 2015 | 2016 | 2017 |
|--|--------------|--------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| Total | 359.2 | 362.5 | 394.2 | 111.4 | 135.0 | 95.7 | 135.8 | 157.8 | 209.8 | 265.3 | 257.8 |
| Standard procedure | 0.2 | 0.1 | 0.09 | 0.05 | 0.07 | 0.06 | 0.06 | 0.07 | 0.07 | 0.10 | 0.24 |
| Simplified procedure total ¹⁵ | 253.1 | 264.3 | 308.9 | 50.7 | 59.0 | 90.1 | 112.4 | 131.3 | 188.2 | 244.8 | 240 |
| Through Compatriots Resettlement Program | 0.068 | 4.466 | 3.6 | 5.2 | 17.3 | 31.3 | 46.3 | 53.8 | 107.0 | 149.6 | 136.9 |
| International Agreements ¹⁶ | 104.3 | 98.1 | 85.2 | 60.6 | 75.9 | 5.4 | 4.8 | 11.3 | 12 | 12 | 11.6 |
| Other | 1.6 | 0.1 | 0 | 0.1 | 0.1 | 0.1 | 18.5 | 15.2 | 9.5 | 8.3 | 6.0 |

Thus, by creating the simplification for the preferred group of compatriots, in order to reduce the anxiety of the local population by attracting culturally similar migrants, the state tried to play “neat nationalism”, which means the balance between the nationalist sentiments of the population and the pragmatism in the migration policy (Mukomel 2005).

The main simplifications that followed after the reframing of the policy in 2003, were the adoption of the “Compatriots Resettlement Program” in 2006 (Presidential Decree N 637, 2006) and creation of the amendments in the law on Citizenship in 2008 that allowed the participants of this program to apply for citizenship without following the standard requirements (Shevel 2012). However, the initial aim of the compatriot program was to select people for “satisfying the demand for development of Russian regions” (Presidential Decree N 1289, 2012). The Compatriots Resettlement Program does not cover all the Russian

¹⁵ The amount of people, who naturalized in Russia by using the simplifications in the Standard Procedure for naturalization in the Russian Federal Law on Citizenship.

¹⁶ The Russian Federation has two international agreements that simplified the naturalization: Agreement between Russia, Belarus, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan and the International Agreement on Double Citizenship between Tajikistan and Russia.

territory; as of 2019 the program includes 57 of Russia's 85 regions. The regions are further divided into prioritized and non-prioritized for the resettlement. Initially the program was designed to be in place for only 5 years. However, despite its overall ineffectiveness (1% of the total amount of applications for the naturalization), after the release of the Presidential Decree N 1289 the program was made permanent.

Figure 1. The Map of Russian Regions that Participate in Compatriots Resettlement Program.¹⁷



Source: Otvety Yuristov. <https://ugmk-insur.ru/>

Another major amendment to the Citizenship law, unrelated to the compatriot program, was the introduction of the simplified access for the people who can prove the status of “Russian-speaker” in 2014 (Federal Law-62, 2002, article 33.1). The amendment strengthened the repatriation component of the Law on Citizenship.¹⁸ In order to apply for this status people have to get in contact with local federal commission and prove that they were constantly residing on the territory of Russian Federation (Federal Law-62, 2002, article 33.1).

¹⁷ Regions that were defined in *violet color* are included in prioritized territories for resettlement. Regions that are indicated in *blue* are in the list of non-prioritized regions for the resettlement. Territories that are defined in *green* are planning to participate in the Compatriots Resettlement program in the near future. Regions that are defined in *yellow* do not participate in the Compatriots Resettlement program.

¹⁸ Rogozina, Galina. 2019, Interview by Xeniya Kryakvina. Nur-Sultan, Kazakhstan.

What are the procedures of naturalization?

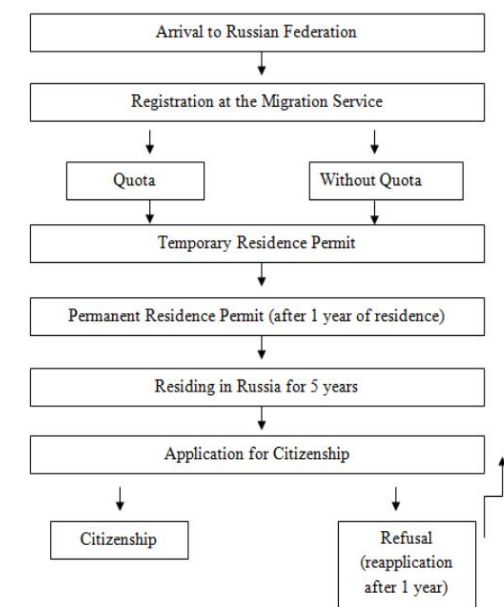
The Law on Citizenship defines two routes for naturalization: standard procedure and simplified procedures. The first is the standard procedure (see figure 1). It starts when the foreigner first comes to Russia with the aim of resettlement and registers at the office of local migration services within 7 work-days (Federal Law N 109, 2006, article 20.1, 20.2). The next step is the application for a temporary residence permit, which is under a yearly quota. The government decides on the quotas for the number of temporary residence permits each region can issue in the beginning of each year (Federal Law N-115, 2002, article 6). In order to apply for the temporary residence permit, a person should submit the application, copy of passport, report of medical checkup and the certificate of knowledge of Russian Language (if required) (Russian Ministry of Internal Affairs). There are several exemptions from the law, allowing people to apply for a temporary residence permit outside of quotas (Federal Law N-115, article 6.3). After the application is submitted the migration services make take up to 6 months to decide whether the temporary residence permit is granted (Federal Law N-115, 2002, article 6.4).

The next step is the application for a permanent residence permit. In order to be able to apply, a person needs to live in Russia for one year after receiving the temporary residence permit (Federal Law N-115, 2002, article 8.2). A person needs to submit set of documents similar to those provided for the temporary residence permit. The application is considered within 6 months after the date of submission. In case if application is approved the person receives the right to stay in Russia for 5 years.

The next step is the application to the Russian citizenship. People who decided to apply through the standard procedure of obtaining citizenship can proceed after five years of having a permanent residence permit (Federal Law N 62, 2002, article 13.1). During that period person should confirm his permanent stay in Russia on a yearly basis (Federal Law N

62, 2002, article 13.1). As long as there were no violations of the procedure, applicant can submit the following documents: application, permanent residence permit, statement on income level, refusal from the citizenship form previous country of residence (not required for refugees), and documents that prove the knowledge of Russian language (Presidential Decree N1325, 2002). The final decision on provision of citizenship is made by the Russian President. After the decision is made person receives the approval within one month, and couple of month will be taken for the process of getting the passport.

Figure 2. The Standard procedure of naturalization in Russian Federation.

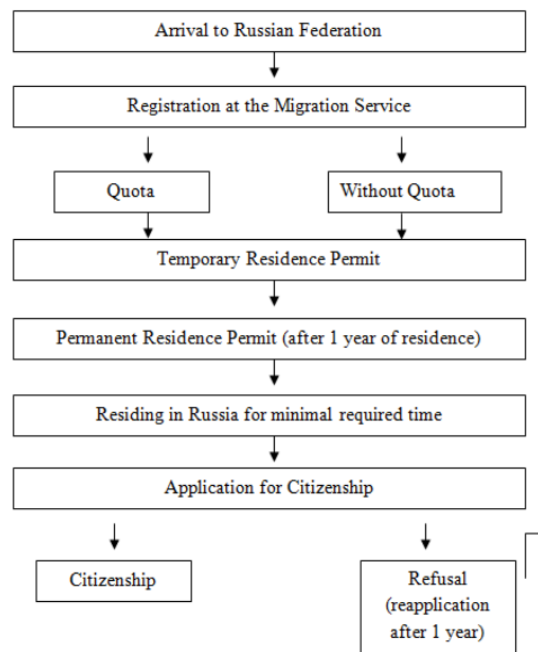


Overall, the procedure requires at least six years of permanent residence in Russian Federation. The route is not popular among the applicants and only a few dozens of people annually apply through the standard procedure (Chudinovskih 2018).

The simplified categories that are suggested in the law are more widely used. Article 14 of the Law on Citizenship contains list of categories of people that are eligible to get simplified access to the citizenship, like people with high qualifications, people who studied in Russia, entrepreneurs, people who have family bonds in Russia, Russian speakers, participants of Compatriots Resettlement Program, etc. The procedure of application through

the simplified categories begins to differ from the standard procedure at the stage of getting the permanent residence permit (see figure 2). The main difference is the reduction in the amount of time of permanent stay in Russia that is required. For example, applicants married to a Russian citizen for at least three years are eligible for citizenship right after they obtained the permanent residence permit. However, people from these categories still have to submit documents concerning their income level and prove knowledge of the Russian language.

Figure 3. The process of naturalization in the Russian Federation through the simplifications in the standard procedure.



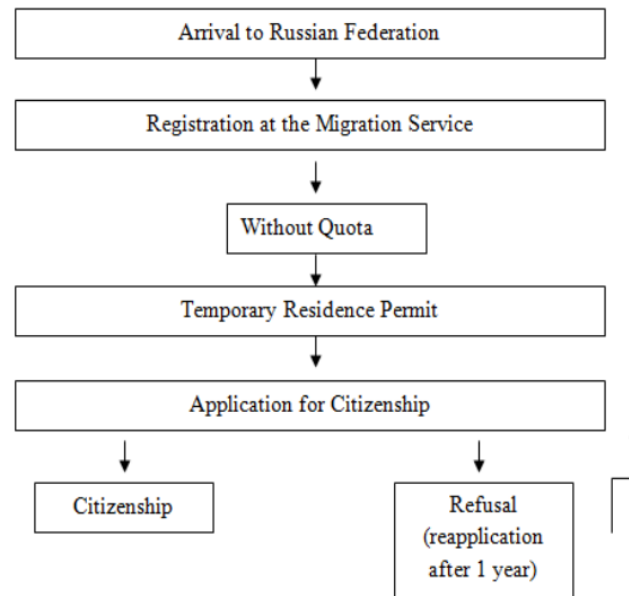
In sum, we can see that the main advantage of simplified procedure is the reduction of time that people spend on a permanent residence permit before they become eligible to apply for the citizenship. However, the majority of bureaucratic procedures associated with the process, like passing medical check-up at each stage, or proving the knowledge of Russian language is still required in the majority of the categories.

The Compatriots Resettlement Program is a category that allows the applicants to deal with minimum required bureaucratic procedures. People can apply for the program together with the family members, not just on individual basis as it is indicated in all other tracks for

naturalization (Presidential Decree N 1289, 2012 article 6). The first stage of the application will be acquisition of the ID of Program participant (see figure 3). It can be done by sending the application with the required personal documents to the Russian Embassy in the current state of residency of a person, or if person moved to Russia they can go directly to branches of the migration services in the Ministry of Internal Affairs. The application is considered and the ID is provided within 60 days since the moment of the application for the Program (Pamyatka Sootechestvenniku 2018). The ID expires after three years; therefore, people who have applied to the state Program should complete the transfer to Russia as soon as possible, because after the expiration of the ID people will lose the status of participant (Pamyatka Sootechestvenniku 2018). After moving to Russia, as with the standard procedure, participants of the program need to apply for the temporary residence permit. The ID provides them with the right to apply for the temporary residence permit without quota (Presidential Decree N 1289, 2012, article 18). Major advantage of the program is that it does not require people to apply for the permanent residence permit in Russia (Federal Law N 62, 2002, article 14.7). Thus, at the stage of the application to the citizenship people need to show the temporary residence permit and the permanent registration.¹⁹ Also, people who have the Compatriots ID do not have to prove the knowledge of Russian Language (Federal Law N 62, 2002, article 14.7). The requirements for the application vary between regions of Russia, because regional government has the right to set the additional criteria for the selection of the applicants (Presidential Decree N 1289, 2012, article 47).

¹⁹ Permanent registration is the document that indicates the right of a person to reside at a living space. In the Russian legislation there is a difference between the temporary registration that person makes by the arrival to the country; and the permanent registration, which is supposed to be done if a person decided to reside in Russia for the period longer than 90 days. Therefore, if a person is going to apply for the permanent residence permit, it is necessary to possess the document that indicates his right to reside at a living space.

Figure 4. The process of naturalization in the Russian Federation through the Compatriots Resettlement Program.



Thus, the Compatriots Resettlement Program allows participants to economize time after getting the temporary residence permit and deal with lesser bureaucratic procedures due to the exclusion of the process of the application for the permanent residence permit. The participants can also request some financial support from the side of the state, like financial compensation from Federal Budget for the expenditures on travel to Russia, transfer of their property, for the expenditures for the application for documents (Presidential Decree N 1289, 2012, article 20). Federal budget also covers the provision of the initial allowance for start of the life in Russia, or “*podyomniye*” (Presidential Decree N 1289, 2012, article 20). Participants in all regions of the program have the right to get this money; however the amount of allowance varies in accordance to the region of resettlement: in the prioritized regions amount of the compensations higher. Regional administration supposed to provide the applicant with the assistance in provision of housing and job opportunities.

Do Simplifications Really Simplify the Resettlement?

From the data presented above, we can see that within the evolution of the legislation on migration in Russia, the category of compatriots became the major group in priority for the immigration. Different authors explain the definition of compatriots in different ways, for example Mukomel (2008) argues that the policy was organized in the way that will help to reduce the xenophobia towards migrants in the regions and was part of the ethnic policy of the state. Shevel (2012) argues that the way the category was presented in the law is too ambiguous and can include vast majority of the migrants that come to Russia and government in its turn can use the program to address policies other than the repatriation.

The policy was organized in the way that does not always correspond to the economic needs of the regions. The Compatriots Resettlement Program is organized the way that the Federal Center covers only minimal amount of expenses: expenditures on the transfer of property, expenditures on the application of documents, allowances (Mukomel 2008). The regions are obliged to provide compatriots with the social guarantees, housing, employment, which is difficult to perform due to the limited nature of regional budgets (Mukomel 2008). This situation forced the regional governments to rearrange the implementation of the program in frames of current needs that regions faced (Mukomel 2008). This to some extent might have affected the fact that the regional commissions started to set their own priorities while accepting the compatriots. For example, the basic requirement for the application in some regions became the work qualification.²⁰

Despite the advantages of the program like the lesser amount of the bureaucratic burden and the possibility of fast access to the citizenship, the organization of the program has several problematic underdevelopments. First, is the fact that the ID of Compatriots is provided only for three years and majority of people who have applied to the program arrive

²⁰ Rogozina, Galina. 2019, Interview by Xeniya Kryakvina. Nur-Sultan.

to Russia towards the expiration of the ID, having obtained the ID in their home country. Thus, those who will not be able to pass all the procedures on time have to start from the beginning of the process (Prudnikov and Yakovlev 2016). Another major issue is the unavailability of the access to the economically developed regions to the program (Prudnikov and Yakovlev 2016). People are supposed to resettle to the regions with the least developed infrastructure and harsh climate that suffer from the lack of human resources (Mukomel 2008). The resettlement to the prioritized regions was motivated by the higher level of the allowances from the federal budget and the provision of housing and employment from the regional budget. However, in practice the housing is available only for the tiny amount of people and only in the rural area (Vorobyeva et al. 2016). Those who decide to move to these regions face another issue – the absence of workplaces (Vorobyeva et al. 2016). In case if people will face the difficulties in finding job, state provides monthly payments in amount of living wage defined by the regional governance, for the period up to 6 month (Presidential Decree N 1289, 2012, articles 20, 21). However, people who apply for the Compatriots Resettlement Program supposed to stay in the region for three years, otherwise they are losing their status and privileges associated with it (Presidential Decree N 1289, 2012, articles 29).

People who apply for the Compatriots Resettlement Program in non-prioritized regions are eligible for lesser support from the side of government: they are not provided with the housing and the monthly payments for the absence of job, the amount of the allowances is lesser than in prioritized regions, they are not able to leave the region, otherwise they will lose the status of compatriot (Presidential Decree N 1289, 2012). The provision of social benefits like employment varies across regions, thus people who decide to move to these regions should mostly rely on their own abilities to find the accommodation and job.

In sum, we can see that despite the problems that people may encounter during the practical implementation of the policy, the Compatriots Resettlement Program provides the possibility to obtain the citizenship in the fastest way and even provides bonus of possibility of getting financial allowances from the government. In the next chapter, I will present my findings from the interviews, and will show that the practical implementation of the Compatriots Resettlement Program is conducted in the way as it is prescribed in law, and the difficulties associated with the bureaucratic procedures are less drastic if we compare them with the implementation of the standard procedure of naturalization. Thus, I will show that the implementation gap in the Russian migration legislation is not that drastic, and the Compatriots Resettlement Program is effective for the people who apply to it.

Chapter 4. The Practical Implementation of the Citizenship Policy in Russia.

In the previous chapter, I presented the comparison between the standard procedures for naturalization and the Compatriot Resettlement program, and have indicated that the program provides more simplifications, in particular, it allows the fastest way to naturalization and provided financial support for migrants. However, the program has been widely criticized based on the underdevelopment and disadvantages such as the territorial limitations and ban on leaving the region for work opportunities, etc.

In this chapter, I will show the evidence for the argument that the Compatriots Resettlement Program works for ordinary people because in fact, it is the fastest way for naturalization which is associated with lesser bureaucratic issues than the standard procedure of getting citizenship. Therefore, the findings that will be presented in this chapter will support my argument, which states that the gap between the policy and its practical implementation is not that drastic. I will present the outcomes from the interviews that were conducted with the people who went through the resettlement via the standard procedure and the Compatriots Resettlement Program. Thus, while conducting the interviews I have concluded that the majority of people were satisfied with their current standard of living and that the state implemented its functions with the provision of fast naturalization and payments that people were supposed to receive. I have found variation between the regions that participate in the Compatriots program, which shows that people who decided to move to prioritized regions enjoy more state support with the provision of work and housing, in comparison with other regions that participate in the program.

I will present my findings in the following way: first, I will show the comparison between the people that followed the standard procedure of naturalization and the Compatriots Resettlement Program based on the main categories that appeared from the data. In particular, the procedures of naturalization, employment, housing, and living standard of

participants. I will elaborate on how the salience of these categories varies depending on the way of naturalization that people choose and variation between the different stages of application. The data shows that people who decide to apply for the Russian citizenship via standard procedure of naturalization encounter more issues while the process of application, it takes more time and resources, whereas people who go through the application to the Compatriots Resettlement Program get their citizenship in shorter period of time, engage with lesser amount of procedures, as it is prescribed by the law, and enjoy more state support in terms of provision with financial allowances, housing and job opportunities. Then I will proceed to the discussion of the argument about the pragmatic nature of the Compatriots Resettlement Program, where I will discuss the regional variation in the implementation of the program by focusing on the categories such as the provision of work, housing and the financial support from the side of the state. I will argue that prioritized regions assist people in terms of provision of workplaces; however, the categories of assistance with housing showed to be problematic.

The Implementation of the Citizenship Law in Russia.

In chapter three, it was indicated that there is a substantial difference between the standard procedure of the application for citizenship in Russia and the Compatriots Resettlement Program. First of all, the standard procedure is much more time consuming than the Compatriots Resettlement Program, because the latter provides the fastest track for Russian citizenship. Also, the Compatriots Resettlement Program allows people to deal with fewer bureaucratic issues, in particular, due to the possibility of application to citizenship without applying for the permanent residence permit, as well as the provision of financial support from the side of the state. These advantages appear to be influential if we compare the data from the interviews with people who received citizenship via the standard procedure and the participants of the Compatriots Resettlement Program.

One of the most significant advantages of the Compatriots Resettlement Program is the relatively small amount of time that people spend on the procedure of naturalization. The range of time for getting citizenship among the interviewees that applied through the Compatriots Resettlement Program varied from two months²¹ to six months²² since the moment of moving to the Russian Federation. I could not find any evidence that the variation in time is based on the territory of the application, because the most extreme cases were both from the same Lipetsk region of the Russian Federation. However, they still fit within the timeframe prescribed by law, thus it is most likely to be the consequence of local bureaucratic procedures that people encounter in their regions of resettlement. In the case of people that applied via the standard procedure, the timing ranged from ten months²³ up to five years²⁴.

All of my participants applied through the simplified standard procedure, which allows a slightly eased procedure for those married to a Russian citizen or those who can demonstrate their status as a native Russian-speaker. Similarly, in these cases, variation across the regions was not salient, because the main factor in determining the amount of time is the limits prescribed by the law to a particular simplification. Overall, the temporal difference between the two groups shows that Compatriots Resettlement Program allows faster access to citizenship in practice as well as it is prescribed by the law.

Another important indicator that could explain the difference in the implementation of the naturalization procedures is the comparison of the process of the application. The most frequent categories that have appeared from the data are related to the process of collection of documents “*spravkas*”, lines and the relations with the employees in the Migration Services, which will be explained further in this chapter.

The Standard Procedure.

²¹ 19.2019, Interview by Xeniya Kryakvina. Nur-Sultan, Kazakhstan.

²² 26.2019, Interview by Xeniya Kryakvina. Nur-Sultan, Kazakhstan.

²³ 3. 2019, Interview by Xeniya Kryakvina. Nur-Sultan, Kazakhstan.

²⁴ 1. 2019, Interview by Xeniya Kryakvina. Nur-Sultan, Kazakhstan.

Chapter 3 explained how participants of the standard procedure go through three stages of the application. The first one is the application for a temporary residence permit. The initial step in this process is the application for the quota, unless they fall into a simplified category (e.g. married to a Russian citizen) that allows them temporary residence status outside quota limits. Several respondents who had applied to the quota for temporary residence permit reported that it was problematic to obtain the quota and that it was one of the most corrupt practices in the procedure of application. They described how they were not able to get information related to the number of remaining quota allotments that were available in the region,²⁵ and that employees of the Migration Service use this lack of information to sell the quotas to applicants:²⁶

...quotas are allocated to regions in large amounts; however, people never know how much exactly is left. They organize demonstrative distributions [of quotas], but this is not important. In 2015 the price for a quota was around 150,000 rubles... Those who are brave enough to make a complaint about their inability to get quota to the Migration Service where they applied before, immediately receive the quota... They [Migration Service] do not need a scandal...²⁷

Information related to the yearly allocation of quota is publicly available on the webpage of Ministry of Internal Affairs. Yet on this site, it states that the information concerning the remaining quotas in the regions should be obtained by contacting local migration services. Thus, participants explained that since local migration offices have sole access to this information, they can use this information to create corruption schemes such as selling quotas.

While there are special services available that fill out documents for the applicants, the majority of my respondents who applied through the standard procedure filled out their documents on their own. Their choice was affected by the high prices of these intermediary

²⁵ 2. 2019, Interview by Xeniya Kryakvina. Nur-Sultan, Kazakhstan.

²⁶ 5. 2019, Interview by Xeniya Kryakvina. Nur-Sultan, Kazakhstan.

²⁷ 2. 2019, Interview by Xeniya Kryakvina. Nur-Sultan, Kazakhstan.

services,²⁸ which is expensive, especially for big families.²⁹ However, the process of filling out documents correctly or to the satisfaction of the bureaucrats was complicated for some of my respondents, and they had to resubmit the documents several times because of mistakes in the documents.³⁰ Some of them were able to manage the issues in the office by bribing the workers of the Migration Service:

I applied on my own; these were the circles of hell... you should pay someone [give a bribe], or they will check all the commas and dots... and what is most important is that in each of the FMS offices there are people that are supposed to consult the population, but in fact, they just impose their services [for money].³¹

An interesting thing to point out here is that those people who went to the special services that help with the filling out of documents justify their decision by stating that it was the most rational option because otherwise, applicants encounter many issues like double-checks and multiple reapplications,³² which is time-consuming. People decide to pay for the migration services to complete their applications rather than to deal with the bureaucratic problems on their own.³³ Thus, people are in some ways forced to pay for the special services in order to get things done more efficiently.

Along with problems with the application of documents, many people reported issues with the lines at the Migration Services. People complained about the lines and the fact that the migration services were not able to serve all of the people in line each day in a majority of the regions, with the exception of participants from Saratov oblast and the Far East region. In order to be able to submit the documents, people had to stand in lines several hours before the opening of the Migration Services;³⁴ the situation was the most difficult during the winter

²⁸ 5. 2019, Interview by Xeniya Kryakvina. Nur-Sultan, Kazakhstan.

²⁹ 11. 2019, Interview by Xeniya Kryakvina. Nur-Sultan, Kazakhstan.

³⁰ 6. 2019, Interview by Xeniya Kryakvina. Nur-Sultan, Kazakhstan.

³¹ 5. 2019, Interview by Xeniya Kryakvina. Nur-Sultan, Kazakhstan.

³² 4. 2019, Interview by Xeniya Kryakvina. Nur-Sultan, Kazakhstan.

³³ 8. 2019, Interview by Xeniya Kryakvina. Nur-Sultan, Kazakhstan.

³⁴ 4. 2019, Interview by Xeniya Kryakvina. Nur-Sultan, Kazakhstan.

time when people had to stay outside in very low temperatures.³⁵ In some regions, the government tried to improve the situation by the introduction of the ticket system “*talony*”, where you register for a particular date and time, so people can avoid queuing. However, according to participants, this system did not create much progress.³⁶ Again, some respondents argue that there are informal options for people who do not want to spend time in lines,³⁷ thus by paying a bribe to the workers of migration services; people were able to buy a place in line:

Author: What about lines? Can you solve them by paying as well?

Respondent: Even in lines with electronic queues... For example, while applying for citizenship, if you will pay now, it is possible to find a place for you sometime next week... but if you will not pay, your turn will come only in a couple of months...³⁸

Several respondents explained the difficulties that they encountered in the Migration Service Centers as the outcome of the “human factor”. In other words, the success of their application and its speed was dependent on the personal attitude of the workers in the migration Centers.³⁹ People of non-Slavic ethnic origin reported cases of ethnic discrimination towards them:

I think that Russia does not provide a chance for Turkish people to get citizenship through these legal procedures... FMS, police, etc. They ask for money, and that is it... we’ve gotten used to this sort of treatment... if you have money in your pocket, then why do you have to wait for months in lines? We’ve adapted because they [FMS] taught us...⁴⁰

Overall, despite the difficulties that people encountered during the process of application, all of the respondents reported that their living standard in Russia was similar or improved in comparison to the level in their previous country of residence, and all of them

³⁵ 2. 2019, Interview by Xeniya Kryakvina. Nur-Sultan, Kazakhstan.

³⁶ 1. 2019, Interview by Xeniya Kryakvina. Nur-Sultan, Kazakhstan.

³⁷ 8. 2019, Interview by Xeniya Kryakvina. Nur-Sultan, Kazakhstan.

³⁸ 5. 2019, Interview by Xeniya Kryakvina. Nur-Sultan, Kazakhstan.

³⁹ 6. 2019, Interview by Xeniya Kryakvina. Nur-Sultan, Kazakhstan.

⁴⁰ 8. 2019, Interview by Xeniya Kryakvina. Nur-Sultan, Kazakhstan.

reported that they were satisfied with the fact of getting Russian citizenship and moving to Russia.

Thus, in this section I have demonstrated that the procedures that people go through while applying to the Russian citizenship via the standard procedure are time-consuming and have many drawbacks; though in the end, they are ultimately successful. In the next section, I will elaborate on the results from naturalization through the Compatriots Resettlement Program and will show that the program is advantageous for people because it economizes their time and simplified official procedure of application works in favor of the Compatriots Resettlement Program by making it more convenient track to citizenship.

The Compatriots Resettlement Program.

In the following section, I will show that The Compatriots Resettlement Program offers simplified procedures compared to the standard naturalization process, allowing people to apply for citizenship as soon as they get their temporary residence permit. Therefore the procedure is much faster. Removal of the stage of getting a permanent residence permit from the list of compulsory procedures simplified the track to citizenship. The larger amount of state support in terms of the provision of financial support and the help with housing and provision of job opportunities makes the Compatriots Resettlement Program more advantageous for people. This track of naturalization has some drawbacks as well, some of them were indicated in Chapter three, and others like long lines and use of informal practices are associated with the local bureaucracy. However, findings show that despite their presence the procedure is much faster and less associated with the bureaucratic burden, which is consistent with the way it is designed in law. These findings support my argument that the implementation gap in the Russian migration policy is not that drastic, as it was explained before.

In Chapter 3, it was explained that participants of the Compatriots Resettlement Program are eligible to apply for a temporary residence permit without a quota, thus, in comparison with the standard procedure this category did not appear in the interviews.

The need to stand in long lines varied by region. Only participants from the Central Federal District were reporting problems of long lines and the fact that the organization of the lines was not effective, people had to stay in the queues since early mornings outside of the building of the Migration Services in harsh weather conditions.⁴¹ This can be explained by the fact that this region receives the majority of the participants of the Compatriots Resettlement Program. For example, in 2017 about 115,770 people applied to the Resettlement program, and 48,090 people decided to resettle to the Central Federal District (National Statistics Committee). Thus, it is likely to be the case that the local authorities are unable to deal with a big amount of migrants arriving to the region. In an attempt to foster the process, some people offered informal payments to state officials,⁴² while others were able to solve issues by making official complaints to the migration services.⁴³

Another major category that appeared in during the conversations with the participants of the Compatriots Resettlement Program was the difficulties with obtaining the permanent registration. As well as in the case of the standard procedure, before applying to citizenship, people need to provide the proof of possession of the permanent registration. However, taking into account the fact that not everyone was able to obtain own housing in the short period of six months, people had to resort to options such as buying the registration.⁴⁴ In some cases, people were able to find the place for the registration through

⁴¹ 24. 2019, Interview by Xeniya Kryakvina. Nur-Sultan, Kazakhstan.

⁴² 27. 2019, Interview by Xeniya Kryakvina. Nur-Sultan, Kazakhstan.

⁴³ 24. 2019, Interview by Xeniya Kryakvina. Nur-Sultan, Kazakhstan.

⁴⁴ 23. 2019, Interview by Xeniya Kryakvina. Nur-Sultan, Kazakhstan.

the grassroots organizations that support the resettlement process, where local activists were registering people in their apartments.⁴⁵

In order to address this issues some regions, in particular, the Lipetsk oblast of the Central Federal District and the Kaliningrad Oblast of the North-West Federal District were assisting people with housing at initial stages of resettlement. In Lipetsk oblast, the authorities of the region created sort of resettlement camps, where people were able to get a permanent registration for free, and even reside, but for the monthly payments:

In Lipetsk, we have three centers for the temporary settlement for compatriots. People can register there for free, the monthly payments for the residence depend on the type of the apartment, like cottages, or dormitories... Living there is much cheaper than paying the rent for the apartment in the cities or in hotels... You can freely choose where to live [within the center] in accordance with your financial status and your will.⁴⁶

There is less data on the availability of facilities for the people who move to the Kaliningrad oblast, however, respondent stated that people were able to make the registration and reside for some period in the dormitories provided by the state authorities.⁴⁷

Some people in the Central Federal District were reporting the fact of inability to register some of their family members, despite the fact of possession of own property,⁴⁸ as it was mentioned above, this problem can also be explained by a large number of migrants in the District, which complicated the work of the Migration Services there.

Overall, participants of the Compatriots Resettlement Program argue that the living standard in Russia was good and in some cases better than in their previous countries of residence. They reported that they do not regret moving to Russia and majority replied that people who are newly resettling to Russia have the same rights and possibilities for the

⁴⁵ 18. 2019, Interview by Xeniya Kryakvina. Nur-Sultan, Kazakhstan.

⁴⁶ 26. 2019, Interview by Xeniya Kryakvina. Nur-Sultan, Kazakhstan.

⁴⁷ 20. 2019, Interview by Xeniya Kryakvina. Nur-Sultan, Kazakhstan.

⁴⁸ 24. 2019, Interview by Xeniya Kryakvina. Nur-Sultan, Kazakhstan.

development with the rest of the citizens of the state, the support that they get from the country is a good start for the beginning of the residence in Russia. Therefore, in a comparative perspective, the major benefit of the Compatriot Resettlement Program is that this track to naturalization is much faster than the standard way of getting citizenship. The removal of quotas for the temporary residence permit and removal of the stage of application to the permanent residence permit in practice allows people to struggle less with the bureaucratic procedures in the country, which is obvious from the reports of the respondents. Thus, participants of the Program were reporting lesser issues like the service related troubles in the process of collection of documents and the problem of staying in lines. Issues like lines and permanent registration that were on some level present in both categories of application show us the fact that the procedures and the implementation have some drawbacks in the Migration Legislation and the regional implementation of these laws, but despite these underdevelopments, Program works for the people who decide to resettle to Russian Federation.

Variation within the Compatriots Resettlement Program.

Experts cited a similar set of problems (lines and extreme bureaucratic procedures) as evidence of the underdevelopment of the legislation. These experts associate these problems with the bureaucracy at the regional level, thus the actions of the local government in the process of setting regional bureaucratic procedures can complicate procedures.⁴⁹ Indeed, my analysis shows that the experience of migrants varies across regions, suggesting that local and regional bureaucratic procedures also vary. The regions that are included in the Compatriots Resettlement Program are considered to be the least developed in terms of economy, infrastructure and the remotely located from the main financial centers of Russian Federation (Mukomel 2008, Prudnikov and Yakovlev 2016). Therefore, while designing the program,

⁴⁹ Ryazantsev, Sergei. 2018, Interview by Xeniya Kryakvina. Nur-Sultan, Kazakhstan.

the government put effort on the creation of the additional benefits for the people to foster the process of resettlement in the regions, like the financial support for the resettlement, the support with the provision of work and housing (Chapter 3). Thus, the Compatriots Resettlement Program indicates that the more remote is the region the more state support people are supposed to receive: if people decide to go to the prioritized regions (Far East and Siberia) state support will be higher in comparison with other regions of the state. Two out of twelve participants that I have interviewed moved to prioritized regions: Amur and Primorye regions.

The outcomes of the interviews with the participants of the Compatriots Resettlement Program shows significant support from the side of the state was in the category of a provision of the work. The participants of the Program, who decided to move to the prioritized territories, could find a job much faster than the people who moved to other parts of Russia that participate in the Program. They indicated that the state suggested the place for the work as soon as they moved in the region,⁵⁰ in one case participant stated that they were suggested the concrete work places before moving to the region:

At the time when we decided to become the citizens of the Russian Federation and develop this country, we decided to move to the Far East, and we know the concrete work places... We contacted the employer in advance, were communicating with the firm and knew our future places of occupation. Then we could build the career by participating in the projects, thus in general, there were no problems with the occupation.⁵¹

The participants who applied to non-prioritized regions stated that the support of the state with the provision of work was minimal. Some of them have indicated that there were state employment services that were supposed to assist people who search for the work by showing the vacancies, however, they were not effective and the vacancies that were

⁵⁰ 23. 2019, Interview by Xeniya Kryakvina. Nur-Sultan, Kazakhstan.

⁵¹ 22. 2019, Interview by Xeniya Kryakvina. Nur-Sultan, Kazakhstan.

available there were for the people with the low qualifications.⁵² Several respondents were not able to find the job because of the lack of work places that require the qualifications that they already had. Therefore, all of the people who applied for the non-prioritized regions of Russia were searching for work on their own. . Some of them were able to solve the problem by searching for the occupation using their personal networks; others retrained in order to get new skills that met the current demands of the region. Several people indicated that at some point they were working illegally because despite their status of compatriot, which should entitle people with similar rights as the citizens of the state, they were unable to find the official job, or the vacancies that were available for the compatriots were very low paid:

I am an engineer, I got my education in of the top universities in Russia... however, when I moved to the region, they [employment service] suggested I work as the furniture assembler. I refused and decided to find a job on my own in accordance with my qualifications. I applied to several factories in Voronezh, where I was rejected based having citizenship of Kazakhstan, despite my status of the participant of the program... In one of the places, they suggested me to work for 5 thousand rubles per month! In the end, I gave up and started to do the construction work illegally...⁵³

Therefore, it is possible to observe the difference on the state support in the category of a provision of work: participants of the program that decide to Resettle to the remote regions of Russia that were prioritized for the resettlement get more state support than people who decide to resettle to other parts of Russia.

Another major advantage of the program is the provision of the financial support from the federal budget, in particular the allowances “*podyemniye*” [financial allowance], the transportation fee and the monthly payments for unemployment in prioritized regions (Chapter 3). The amount of financial support is larger in the regions that are prioritized to the

⁵² 20. 2019, Interview by Xeniya Kryakvina. Nur-Sultan, Kazakhstan.

⁵³ 21. 2019, Interview by Xeniya Kryakvina. Nur-Sultan, Kazakhstan.

resettlement, thus people in advance know the difference between the amounts of financial help that they are eligible to receive.

The data did not show variation between the regions in terms of the timely delivery of financial support. People were able to get the payments in a short period of time and the procedure was not associated with the complexities like lines and filling the documents. Only one respondent from my sample reported that he could not get the full amount of his allowance, in particular, his reimbursements for transportation costs to Russia. Participant associates this problem with the bureaucratic difficulties in the country.⁵⁴ This participant was the refugee that moved to Russia after the start of the military operations in Eastern Ukraine. Previous research that was focusing on the process of naturalization of Ukrainian refugees in Russia indicated that several regions in Russia failed to make the payments.⁵⁵ One of the potential explanations for this particular case might be the fact that participant applied for the program in 2015 when the level of participation in the Compatriots Resettlement Program was the highest – 179,660 people (National Statistics Committee). The participant was from the Amur region of the Far-East Federal District, which in 2015 received 991 participants; this amount is much higher than in 2014 (586) and 2016 (465) (National Statistics Committee). Thus, it is possible that the inability of people to get the payments at that particular period was associated with the huge influx of people and inability of services to deal with a large bureaucratic burden. However, more research should be done on this issue.

In Chapter three it was mentioned that if people leave the region where they applied for the participation in the Compatriots Resettlement Program, they have to refund the payments that they receive from the state. Some respondents reported that they refused to

⁵⁴ 22. 2019, Interview by Xeniya Kryakvina. Nur-Sultan, Kazakhstan.

⁵⁵ Myhre, Marthe. 2019, Interview by Xeniya Kryakvina. Nur-Sultan, Kazakhstan.

take the payments from the government in order to preserve the mobility within the country,⁵⁶ which can be an indicator of the underdevelopment of the program.

Housing is a salient category as well. On the stage of registration in Russia, people face the issue of finding a place to register because not everyone is able to afford buying an apartment or house as soon as they arrive. The support with housing and the registration at the initial stage showed to be active only in two regions Kaliningrad and Lipetsk oblasts. However, this option was temporary and people still had to pay for the permanent residence. If it comes to the support with the provision of the temporary housing for the people, none of my participants, despite the region indicated that the state was helpful in this issue.

Overall, we can see that the most significant variation between the regions within the Compatriots Resettlement Program is based on the provision of work for the participants. People from the prioritized regions enjoy more state support in this direction, as it was actually indicated in the Program (Chapter 3). Thus, the local government, in fact, makes effort to support people in the regions where the economic conditions are the harshest. However, as we can see it is less effective in the provision of support for people who go to the other regions of Russia, thus people who have applied to the program have to rely on their own abilities to find a workplace. Therefore, they adjust to the demand of economies in their regions or decline the financial support from the side of the state in order to be able to move freely after getting citizenship.

Conclusion.

This chapter argues that despite the wide criticism of the Compatriots Resettlement Program by experts and the media, the experience of migrants shows the possibility of obtaining Russian citizenship in the less complicated and less time and resource consuming manner. Although the bureaucratic problems like the underdevelopment of the Legislation

⁵⁶ 26. 2019, Interview by Xeniya Kryakvina. Nur-Sultan, Kazakhstan.

and drawbacks of the service of the Migration offices were reported, people still could get access to citizenship and some benefits of the Program. There is substantial variation in the assistance from the side of the state within the program; nevertheless, people who went through the procedure reported their satisfaction with their current living standard and the prospects for development as the citizens of Russian Federation. Therefore, findings show that the gap between the way policy was designed and its practical implementation is not as drastic as critics have claimed. Despite the presence of several categories that indicated the informal ways of dealing with issues with the migration services, most of the procedure was conducted in frames of laws.

Chapter 5. Conclusion and the Prospects for Future Research.

The establishment of control over the state borders and the creation of the institution of citizenship for this purpose is one of the basic priorities of modern countries. Not many states create policies that do not accept migrants; therefore, it is important for countries to define the categories of people that they want to attract to the state. In the process of designing the migration policy, states balance between conflicting international, economic and cultural demands of the state. The inability of states to balance between these demands results in the emergence of gaps between the policy intentions and outcomes. In this work, I have addressed two types of gaps: the gap between the rhetoric and the design of policy, and the difference between the policy and its practical implementation. I made my argument based on the example of the Russian migration policy and the Compatriot Resettlement program.

Current research project stated that rising identity appeals from the side of the Russian government lead to the creation of the discursive gap. Thus, the government developed the nationalist discourse on migration policy, which prioritizes the “wanted category” of Compatriots; however, written policies in Russia focus on economic demands of the state. Also, this increased economic need of the state, in its turn, fostered the implementation of the migration policy of the state, so the implementation gap was closed, while scholars and policymakers were arguing that the gap exists and the Compatriots Resettlement Program was considered as ineffective.

While conducting the research I was referring to the qualitative methods of data collection. In particular, I have conducted 27 interviews with the people who went through the process of naturalization in Russia, twelve of them applied to citizenship through the Compatriots Resettlement Program and fifteen used different simplifications in the standard procedure of naturalization. The interviews allowed me to learn the patterns in which the

practical implementation of the citizenship legislation in Russia goes, especially the peculiarities of dealing with the bureaucracy. In addition to that, I have interviewed 4 four experts on the nationalism and citizenship of Russian Federation, who helped me to reveal patterns in which citizenship policy in Russia is implemented, in particular, to understand that the essence of the Compatriots Resettlement Program is pragmatic and oriented on the economic demands of the regions. Also, in this project I used the secondary sources such as the Federal Law on Migration; Presidential Decrees; Decrees of Government of Russian Federation, Compatriot Resettlement Program, Citizenship Law of Russian Federation with the amendments, and the regional requirements for the implementation of the Compatriots Resettlement Program.

My findings provided support for my argument. Based on the interviews with experts and the analysis of the regional requirements of the Compatriots Resettlement Program, I could figure out that despite the development of the official rhetoric in the way that prioritizes compatriots and design perceptions of this category as cultural or ethnic, in fact state is targeting people who will be economically beneficial and can contribute to the development of regions that participate in the Program. Thus, the state searches for people of a certain age, who will be able to find the job and accommodation and will rely on a minimal amount of state support. Therefore, the ambiguity of the definition of compatriots allowed the state to design policy the way it will address the economic needs of the country and at the same time to preserve social stability.

From the interviews with participants of the Compatriots Resettlement Program and analysis of the migration legislation of the Russian Federation, I could figure out that the attempts of the state to address the economic needs of the country fostered the implementation of this economically-oriented migration policy. Thus, the implementation gap was closed, despite that the scholarly literature was stating otherwise. Data showed that

the Compatriots Resettlement Program is the fastest way of naturalization in Russia. The removal of quotas for the temporary residence permit and removal of the stage of application to the permanent residence permit allows people to struggle less with the bureaucratic procedures in the country, which is obvious from the reports of the respondents. Thus, participants of the Program were reporting lesser issues like the service related troubles in the process of collection of documents and the problem of staying in lines than people who applied through the standard procedure of naturalization. The variation that was found within the Compatriots Resettlement Program was present; again in accordance with the law, thus people from prioritized regions for resettlement were able to enjoy more state support than participants who applied to non-prioritized regions for resettlement. In sum, this research project could show that the implementation gap is not that drastic as it was presented above, and the Compatriots Resettlement Program works for ordinary people.

This study has the potential for future investigations. First, the study covered participants from only four Federal Districts of Russia; therefore it would be useful to expand the territorial limits of the study. The expansion of the sample of the participants can show more categories that will be useful for the analysis of the implementation of the citizenship laws in the country. Organization of the field work in Russia and establishing closer personal contacts with people could improve the quality of the study as well.

Another improvement that could be done is an organization of the study that will focus on the variation of the implementation of the Program within regions and comparing in more detail the advantages and disadvantages of the regional policies, which could potentially be very helpful for the policymakers who are interested in improving the Compatriots Resettlement Program.

The drawbacks of the citizenship and migration policy in Russia are actively articulated in the public media in Russia. As we can see from the release of the new Concept

of the Migration Policy of Russian Federation for the 2019-2025 years, the president started to actively engage in the process of fostering naturalization and implementing ambitious plans for attracting Russian-speaking people from the post-Soviet countries, in particular compatriots. Ambitious plans of the Russian government to develop the migration policy of the country create many opportunities for the increase in the number of scholars who can study the migration processes on the post-Soviet space. Thus, providing the chance to the exploration of the design of the migration policies of the state and understanding the potential ways of dealing with problems in the process of implementation of laws.

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